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ABSTRACT

The author describes four exemplary inservice programs dealing with career education for the handicapped, and reviews current issues in the field. Among programs cited are Project T.H.O.R. (Training Habilitators of the Retarded), a statewide inservice program for teachers and administrators working with the trainable mentally retarded; and the Vocational Education Inservice Training Project at the University of Kansas which has developed training packages for both vocational and special educators. Inadequacies in the development of career education inservice programs are seen to include absence of programing at the elementary level, and poor relations between vocational and special education personnel. Implications of P.L. 94-142, the Education for All Handicapped Children Act, on the field are discussed. (CL)

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CAREER EDUCATION - The State of the Art of Inservice Training

It is with great pleasure that I am speaking to you today on the subject of inservice programs dealing with career and vocational training of the handicapped individual. Until recently, the common educational practice had been to exclude most, if not all, handicapped students from training in this area and consequently, special education personnel have been trained by our teacher preparation facilities in the traditional manner of elementary education teachers. That is, the key training has been in the methodology and technique of academic instruction. Subjects such as reading education, math education and art education have been the staples of teacher training programs for personnel wishing to work with handicapped students. As regards vocational education programming options, it is appalling to observe how few special education teachers have had any formal training in this area. A survey conducted jointly by the Pennsylvania Department of Education and the Outreach Training Models Project in 1975 indicated that of 164 teachers surveyed who were, at the time, teaching classes for the mentally retarded, only 6 or 4% had any formal background or training in vocational education; and of these 6, 4 of them had received the training on a voluntary, post-graduate basis.

It has now become obvious to many special education personnel that the handicapped can profit from vocational and career training. Teacher preparation facilities have begun a concerted effort to train these individuals presently in university programs. Dr. Brock has amply expounded on the program content of a number of pre-service programs. The question must be asked, however, what of the personnel who have completed the formal university curriculum and are presently credentialed? How are they to receive the skills necessary to develop viable career and vocational programs in their classrooms? One of the solutions has been inservice training.

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There is little doubt that the university structure will assimilate a proportion of this re-training through the expansion and continued utilization of continuing education programs, but there are certain mitigating circumstances that preclude the university from meeting all our needs in this area. First of all, the resources and expertise available for this area on the university level are somewhat limited due to the fact that this is a relatively new area, and this limitation dictates that not all teachers can avail themselves of the university option. Secondly, the taking of courses from the university generally includes a significant expense on the part of the teacher. The expense can act as a deterrent for the already certified teacher. And finally, many teachers do not work in either urban centers or university areas where this continuing education experience can be readily available. It is not practical to assume that a teacher will travel upwards to 100 miles at the end of the school day for training. For these and other reasons, inservice education has become a viable option.

One of the great advantages of inservice training has been the fact that the training can come to the teacher - in essence, meeting that teacher on his or her home grounds. The feelings of academic aloofness and theoretical whitewashing can be quickly dispelled when the trainer has to face the practical realities of the classroom. In more than one instance, I have been rudely awakened from my theoretical expoundings by teachers who have said they could prove the theory did not hold water and then went ahead and offered the proof of the pudding right there on the spot. The university can rarely offer the teacher that type of opportunity.

Inservice programming also has the advantages of usually being free to the teacher, and in many cases, recognized for salary increases by the local schools so that teachers will have the incentive to attend Thus, the opportunities for providing career and vocational development competencies among practicing teachers of the handicapped seems to be well served by inservice education.

It would, of course, be impossible to delineate and credit every existing inservice program that is presently operable throughout the United States. What I would like to do in the time remaining to me is to mention a few exemplary programs and explain the background and structure of each. Finally, I would like to conclude with some observations concerning the state of the art and where we may be going from here.

I'll begin with an inservice program towards which I am obviously somewhat favorably biased if, for no other reason, than my personal involvement as its former director. Project T.H.O.R. which stands for Training Habilitators of the Retarded is a B.E.H. funded personnel training program designated to deliver pre-vocational and social education inservices to teachers and administrators working with the trainable mentally retarded throughout the state of Pennsylvania. A number of points demonstrate the unique aspects of the program:

1. All teachers within the entire state of Pennsylvania working with T.M.R. students are being offered the inservice which allows a uniform set of competencies to be developed.
2. The inservice program is longitudinal in nature. Teachers receive 45 hours of instruction spread over a time period ranging from 15 weeks to 7 months. This gives participants an opportunity to try out newly acquired information, evaluate its effectiveness, and modify procedures along with the instructor.
3. Inservicing procedures are also available for other personnel from teacher-aide through executive director or superintendent, and attempt to provide all levels with skills that are applicable to their situation.
4. The overall goal is the competitive employment of the moderately to severely retarded through effective personnel training. The emphasis is on achievement potential rather than past failures.

5. In order to accomplish this, T.H.O.R. personnel also can provide in-class follow-up and demonstration of instructional objectives in the teacher's own classroom.

Programming within the Project T.H.O.R. sequence includes such areas as career education, utilization and construction of jigs and fixtures, task and job analyses, methods-time measurement or time motion study, normalization, and vocational evaluation. In all, there are 15 program areas within the framework of social and vocational education that are covered in the inservice package.

One final point concerning Project T.H.O.R. is that it attempts to operate as a university without walls. This includes both the granting of degree equivalency credits to participants who attain competence levels and the possibility of obtaining university graduate credits through cooperating universities. The T.H.O.R. Program is obviously not the only inservice program on the east coast.

A program such as the special study institute jointly sponsored by the Connecticut and Massachusetts Boards of Education is indicative of the kind of exceptional program achievements that may be realized in the area of career and vocational education for the handicapped. The inservice objective of this program has been two-fold. First, the identification of specific areas of inservice need from the participants themselves and secondly, the remediation of specific inservice needs in a longitudinal inservice program.

Historically, local vocational-technical schools had not significantly inserviced handicapped secondary youth in the Connecticut-Massachusetts area. Surveys of the local facilities indicated strongly that the vo-tech schools needed assistance in planning to accommodate special needs youth within their facilities. The special study institute attempted to identify model programs, imitate the problems in implementation of these model programs and to suggest solutions which would act as a catalyst to overcoming these implementation

difficulties. It should be noted that the initial search and identification phase of the program was, in essence, an inservice program unto itself, with participants very much a part of the discovery process. Among the overriding concerns expressed in the initial phase of inservice was that the vocational-technical staff was not prepared to receive special needs students. There was, therefore, a need for continued inservice for both related subjects and shop teachers. It was also determined that in order to allow the special needs students to become a viable entrant into the vo-tech curriculum, specific skills and training would have to be given while the child was still in the special education classroom.

As a result of the initial inservice phase, the special study institutes held a longitudinal inservice on the vocational education and career counseling of exceptional adolescents. The program was designed to serve 40 special educators and covered such areas as supportive services, assessment and evaluation, career preparation, individualized career planning and job placement.

Similar to Project T.H.O.R., the special studies institute has evaluated their participant teachers utilizing a pre-post test model and questionnaire designed to elicit strengths and weaknesses of the inservice.

It is interesting to note that, although the special studies institute and T.H.O.R. have some distinct similarities, there are also some major differences.

The special studies institutes were designed to cut across categories of handicapped, integrated students. Very little emphasis was placed on the moderately to severely handicapped individual. The special studies institute was also designed to utilize the snowball effect in the delivery of inservices. The second phase of inservice training was geared to 40 participants. These 40 individuals would then become the disseminators of information to their counterparts within the school situation. The Project T.H.O.R. inservices, on the other hand, deliver direct services to a population of approximately 1,575 teachers, aides and administrators.

A third program in the Northwest U.S. cutting across categorical areas and giving somewhat equal emphasis to both mildly and moderately handicapped are the O.S.P.I. inservice training programs operating in the state of Washington. While the program is not exclusively career and vocational education based, the components that deal with these areas are exceptionally well designed and data based. It is with more than passing interest that much of the program in the state of Washington concerned itself with meeting guidelines established under P.L. 94-142. The State Department of Education, in seeking to establish appropriate educational opportunities for every handicapped child, surveyed all educational personnel from all disciplines servicing handicapped students to determine the areas of primary need in the implementation of this law . As a result of this survey, one of the key areas in which training was seen as essential was that of career and vocational programming.

It should be noted that the inservice training that is being discussed here is based on a statewide program. Each individual E.S.D.-L.E.A. also formulates a localized program.

The state of Washington coordinates all its inservice programming through O.S.P.I. This includes programming done on a statewide level and programming done on a local level. In this manner, district service needs, as well as those statewide needs, both mandated and identified, can be dealt with. Among the inservice needs that have been worked on in the area of career and vocational education have been:

1. Workshops to develop career education curriculum packets and to train teachers of the handicapped to effectively utilize these packets during instruction. This program cut across categorical lines and was designed to allow participants to train students with any handicapping condition.

2. A second workshop dealing with the integration of pre-vocational concepts into the special education classroom was held for teachers of various disability groups during May of 1976. The emphasis of this program was to enable the teachers to train their students in the skills and behaviors necessary for seeking and securing competitive employment. It is important to realize that training was not in specific vocational areas, but rather in the methodologies of teaching pre-vocational skills such as self-help, communications and interpersonal relationships in such a manner as to relate them to a work environment.

The greatest strength of the O.S.P.I. Washington program seems to be that inservice education in all areas remains fluid but directive. There is a definite committment on the part of both the State Department of Education and the local school districts to continually assess the level of competence teaching personnel hold in any area, and to arrange practical inservice programs which will aid in building competencies.

The idea that this inservice plan has been developed in response to P.L. 94-142, as previously mentioned, is of major importance to all of us. The day of educational accountability is upon us, and it is the opinion of many that this accountability must go far beyond the three R's. It seems increasingly plausible to assume that the purpose of education is to train students, regardless of their handicap, to become functioning members of the society-at-large. Since a significant portion of each lifetime is spent in one's employment field and successful employment of an individual is usually vital to community adjustment, it, therefore, becomes contingent upon the schools to provide training in both career awareness and job skills to all handicapped students. Before these skills can be acquired by students, however, it is imperative that teaching faculty have the expertise to deliver these skills.

Another program designed to develop these skills is the "Vocational Education Inservice Training Project" headed by Madelyn Regan at the University of Kansas designed to facilitate (1) a unified approach between the disciplines of special education and vocational education in dealing with special needs children; and (2) provides a bssis for the training of vocational teachers in effective techniques and specialized skills to deal with special needs individuals in regular and vocational programs. Through the use of a steering committee approach, the project has sought to: (1) establish a cooperative relationship between school personnel, vocational teachers and special educators; (2) establish a mutual knowledge base and provide training which is deemed necessary in the particular situation to impart the required competencies for dealing with the handicapped population in a regular vocational class; (3) to develop an inservice training program which uses local school district participation and resources; and (4) to create a model that can be replicated and adopted by other school systems and training institutions.

One of the most significant aspects of this inservice program has been the development of training packages that gear towards both special and vocational educators. The project attempts to identify common characteristics and competencies which both special and vocational educators need to work with special needs individuals, and to develop inservice programming that would meet the needs of both groupings.

In addition to general inservice programs, the Kansas project has attempted to produce inservice training guides and materials which can be incorporated into the local inservice delivery system. This program, therefore, seems to be highly exportable and longitudinal above and beyond the length of the project.

One other important point relating to the Kansas project is that there is a grass roots base to the development of inservice programs. The project utilizes

an advisory panel with local individuals who are involved with input of local needs. The project, therefore, does not unilaterally force inservices upon districts but, in reality, develops inservice programs based on local needs.

It seems obvious that the state of the art of inservice training in career and vocational education has come a long way in just the last few years. We are not, however, where we would like to be. There have been both lacks in programming and philosophical differences that have prevented inservice education in our field from reaching its fullest potential.

It now seems that the major thrust of inservice programs in both career and vocational education for the handicapped has been on the level of secondary education. Although it is obvious that there is a pressing need for training at this level, and that satisfying this need will bring rapid fruition to our most basic goals in this area, it is not the level where training should be starting. We must bring training in this area down to the elementary level. If we are to recognize the fact that the handicapped must have the opportunity to become functioning, participating members of the community-at-large, it is important that we isolate the skills that will lead to this integration process and begin to train students on day one of their school careers. Teachers at the elementary level have received almost all of their training in pure academic skills. Vocational and career education is as alien to their teaching philosophies as nuclear physics. Too often, inordinate amounts of time and effort are put into the teaching of a youngster readiness skills for reading while, in truth, these skills could be more effectively taught in the context of career development programs. Elementary teachers must be made aware of the content and principles of career and vocational education and must be taught to adapt these principles for use in the elementary curriculum. This seems to be the most important issue facing those working in the area of inservice training in career and vocational programs for the handicapped.

Another area of critical importance is the often petty disputes that seem to be a part of the day to day interaction of vocational education and special education personnel. The arguments rage on both sides: First, that vocational education personnel are qualified to deliver the training in their specialty area to any student, regardless of the handicapping condition, and secondly, that special education personnel are qualified to train their handicapped students in any area of the curriculum. In practice, it has often been discovered that both arguments are basically incorrect. Inservice training for the vocational education teacher must deal with curriculum adaptation and special problems of the handicapped, along with specific adaptation of industrial machinery so that the handicapped student can receive maximal benefits from his training program. For the special education teacher, the inservice training must consist of actual techniques of vocational instruction and the development of specific vocational skills that will be necessary to effect programs.

To insure both of these training situations would, at best, involve a longitudinal and financial commitment on the part of training agencies which would be absolutely staggering. There is much doubt as to whether a training model of this sort would be feasible or even advisable. There are, however, logical alternatives. The most obvious solution is for special education and vocational education to cast aside their differences and work cooperatively toward a common goal. It seems realistic to team special educators and vocational educators together so that the strengths of one program compliment the strengths of the other. The thrust of inservice training, therefore, becomes cooperative program planning between special education and vocational education.

The next major issue revolves around P.L. 94-142. There have been tremendous amounts of discussion centered around this law and the impact upon the educational community. Most discussions have centered around the impact of the law on the

individual education plans or I.E.P.'s that are going to be required for every handicapped student. The problem that has been found, however, is that initial attempts at writing I.E.P.'s have centered around traditional special education models that have emphasized academic and motor remediations, and with the exception of the state of Washington, has not given much emphasis to either career or vocational education concepts for handicapped students. I predict that unless state departments of education begin to emphasize career and vocational education training for their teachers, there will be a raft of hearings revolving around the issue of whether or not academic placements are appropriate educational placements for many of the secondary handicapped. It would seem that if the emphasis of the law is to guarantee that every student receives an appropriate public education, then the schools are going to have to re-evaluate their present educational models and,as a result of this re-evaluation, provide intensive inservice training in areas in which special education teachers hold little expertise.

A final issue that would seem to warrant discussion is that of length of intensity of inservice programming. The traditional model of inservice training has been either one shot or, at best, short term in nature. These inservice methods were adequate when training was primarily of a refresher nature, or were dealing with single skill learning situations such as the setting of behavioral objectives, but do not serve the intended purpose when the instruction is in a new multiple skill area such as career or vocational education. In order to effect training in these areas, we are going to need longitudinal training models. While this may sound simplistic, the road to implementation of longitudinal training is paved with problems. In this day of stringent union contracts and tight financial structures, it may not be feasible to provide training on either an after-school or release-time basis. Unions have been insistent upon overtime pay for after-school

training, and release-time models often require the utilization of substitute teachers which can become a considerable expense to the school district. It would seem that there is a definite need for moderation on the part of both districts and unions in reaching a compromise which will enable adequate training models to be developed.

There is little doubt that inservice education is going to be at the forefront in teacher education for many years. All areas of education are going to be affected by inservice advances, but few will feel the impact of inservice training as much as career and vocational training programs for teachers of the handicapped. As this field blossoms and matures, we might finally see truly appropriate education plans developing for handicapped students.